

U.S. Department of Transportation
BEAUTIFYING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes
March 31, 2026

The Beautifying Transportation Infrastructure Council (BTIC or the Council) met Monday, March 31, 2026, on *Government Zoom*. Justin Shubow, BTIC Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time. In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public.

The following individuals participated in the meeting:

Council Members

Justin Shubow, Chair
Bradley Cambridge
Maryam Ghyabi-White
Gary Meisner
Jason Pike
Peter Quintanilla
Kim Vierheilig

Governmental Representatives

Julianne S. Schwarzer, Designated Federal Officer, U.S. DOT
Michelle Ethun, Office of the Secretary of Transportation, U.S. DOT
Rachel McBrien, Facilitator, U.S. DOT Volpe Center
Theodore Silverman, Special Assistant to Chief of Staff, U.S. DOT
Loren A. Smith, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy, U.S. DOT

Call to Order

Justin Shubow called the meeting to order. Julianne Schwarzer welcomed the participants to the meeting.

Meeting Logistics

Rachel McBrien provided an overview of the meeting logistics and agenda.

Approval of Minutes from February 2, 2026, Meeting

Ms. Schwarzer presented the minutes from the February 2, 2026, meeting, noting they were circulated to Council members in advance of this meeting. Gary Meisner moved to approve the minutes. Peter Quintanilla seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by the Council.

Presentation: FACA Overview

Ms. Schwarzer provided a presentation on the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), which

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provides the legal framework for the Department of Transportation (DOT) to seek advice and recommendations from non-federal experts. Key rules include having a chartered committee or council, maintaining balanced membership, holding open public meetings, and announcing meetings in the Federal Register at least seven days in advance. The roles of the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) and the Chair were outlined. Council members were reminded that they can only speak to the media or Congress in their personal capacity, not on behalf of the Committee or the Department.

Presentation: Council Charter

Ms. Schwarzer reviewed the BTIC Charter, which serves as the guiding document signed by the Secretary of Transportation. BTIC's objective is to provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary on enhancing the aesthetic value of the nation's transportation systems. The Council operates in an advisory capacity and does not exercise program management responsibilities. The Council reports to the Secretary of Transportation through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy. The potential for the creation of subcommittees which, if formed, would report their work to the full Council for adoption, was discussed.

Task 26-01 Introduction: Expanding the Principles for Beautiful Transportation

Ms. McBrien introduced Task 26-01, Expanding the Principles for Beautiful Transportation, which asks the Council for feedback regarding the principles and elements of beautiful transportation infrastructure across all modes of transportation. The Secretary is seeking recommendations on policies, designs, and funding priorities that beautify infrastructure while maintaining safety and efficiency.

A few Council members inquired about what could be discussed during the task discussion. Mr. Meisner asked if international practices may be included and Ms. Schwarzer confirmed they are welcome. Mr. Quintanilla asked if the scope included pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and it was confirmed that any activities funded by the U.S. DOT are within scope. Mr. Shubow requested information on current aesthetic principles used by the Department. Ms. Schwarzer noted existing resources such as the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official's Green Book and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, suggesting that the Council could recommend how aesthetics might be integrated into such guidelines. The five preliminary DOT principles were highlighted prior to the task discussion: Uplift and inspire travelers, harmonize with the surrounding landscapes, complement local architectural heritage, incorporate art and design features, and harness form to advance function. The discussion about the task followed and notes of the conversation can be found in Council Notes for Task 26-01: Expanding the Principles for Beautiful Transportation.

Announcement of U.S. DOT Beautifying Transportation Infrastructure Challenge

Michelle Ethun presented on the Beautifying Transportation Infrastructure Challenge, which is open from March 13, 2026, to May 13, 2026. The Challenge seeks innovative concepts from the

